

Tape 36

Side A, 1 1/3 - 1 1/2

11 December 1978

STAT

NOTE FOR:

FROM:

DCI

STAT

I'd like to see before I go on
leave for five minutes each just to say farewell and thanks before they
retire on 29 December.

STAT

cc:

STAT

Xerox to

11 Dec

Article appeared
on page A-13

7 December 1978

Ex-Diplomat Saw Early Signs of Jones Paranoia

By Jeremiah O'Leary
Washington Star Staff Writer

A former official at the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown said cult leader Jim Jones was showing clear signs of paranoia as early as February.

John D. Blacken, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown from July 1976 to last March, recalled that he flew to Jonestown in February with a State Department desk officer.

He said one of Jones' lieutenants, Tim Carter, flew with them on the visit to the colony to investigate several reports that some residents were being held against their will.

"Knowing what I know now and reading reports that Carter is regarded by the Guyanese police as a material witness in this horror," Blacken said, "I shudder a little

about that particular trip to Jonestown."

But Blacken, now an aide to U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, said he and his companion were well treated.

Jones, according to Blacken, began to speak of how the FBI and the CIA were out to get him. Blacken said he felt that Jones' condition was one of paranoia.

"THAT'S BECAUSE I know of no CIA interest in Jones and his colony. After all, they were out there in the jungle as isolated as could be. I couldn't imagine why any of the intelligence agencies would care what Jones and his group were doing in this out-of-the-way place," Blacken said.

CIA agents in the past were stationed in Guyana under embassy cover and probably still are. The CIA contingent there probably is small in keeping with the relatively small size and remoteness of the country. Richard Welch, who was murdered two years ago when he was CIA station chief in Athens, was the CIA station chief in Georgetown in the mid-1960s.

Prime Minister Forbes Burnham said in a recent interview that he never knew Welch had been the CIA official in his capital until he read so after the assassination. Burnham said he never suspected that a deputy chief of mission would be an officer of the CIA.

tour there because the United States did not appoint an ambassador to Georgetown for many months. Thus Blacken was the ranking U.S. diplomat there for much of the period that Jones was expanding his colony after establishing it in 1974.

Blacken said it was the embassy's practice to inform Jones in advance of the persons they wanted to talk with so that they would be available.

Jones, he said, permitted the State Department officials to be alone with the persons they came to inquire about, but that most of the discussion was conducted in the crowded assembly hall.

"Even though we were able to talk alone and face-to-face to the individuals about whom we had instructions to check," Blacken said, "they did not tell us they wanted to leave and nobody slipped us any notes as was the case with Rep. Leo Ryan and his party."

"I WAS UNDER the impression

that the Jonestown people believed Jones had an all-seeing eye and could tell what they were doing even when he was not present. . . ."

Blacken said the mail received by the embassy in Georgetown about how Jones ran his cult contained as many favorable references as unfavorable ones.

"When I got to Jonestown, I was well received," Blacken said. "No one threatened us. I explained that we were there to inquire into complaints. Jones seemed to react normally to the embassy's need to make such inquiries when I said that we had no authority to investigate Americans living overseas and were only there to make sure no one was being held against his will or that no violations of the law were taking place."

Ambassador John Burke has said about four embassy visits were made there in this calendar year and there was fairly constant contact between the embassy and Jones' headquarters in Georgetown.